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REVIEW

OF

REV. O. E. DAGGETT'S SERMON

OF

"TIME OF THE END UNCERTAIN,"

In the National Preacher of Dec. 1842.

BY S. BLISS.

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REVIEW.



The December number of the "National Preacher," contains a Sermon, entitled, "The time of the End uncertain," by Rev. O. E. Daggett, pastor of the South Congregational church, Hartford, Ct. The object of this discourse appears to be, to prove that we can never know with any certainty, the time of the Second Advent; and therefore, that no confidence can be placed in any of the evidence upon which the near approach of that event is predicated. It is singular that while a century ago, the whole Protestant church were endeavoring to acquire all the light possible upon the prophecies of Daniel and John, yet, now, the same church is equally anxious to throw darkness upon those prophecies.

The discourse under review has for its text, Acts. i. 6, 7. "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power."

It is ably written, and, as far as we can discover,

contains none of the bitterness, which too often characterizes the writings of our opponents.

The author does not discuss the questions of a temporal millennium, the return of the Jews, &c, &c. or attempt any exposition of the prophecies in opposition to the views of the believers of the Second Advent. Of the *time* of that event he says, "I am not to show that it will not take place at any particular time, whether in the next century, or next spring, or to-morrow; but only that *we do not know when*." P. 266. As he has confined himself to *that question*, and does not attempt to show that it will not take place at any particular time, it follows, that there can be nothing in this argument, but what will be equally valid the day before the Advent—however near, or distant in the future, that day may be—as it was the day it was written.

If this position is correct, that we cannot know when the *time* of the Advent will be, it will follow, that the present movement in expectation of that event may end in disappointment. We will therefore, briefly examine the arguments by which that position is sustained, believing that we may know the time of that event.

He admits that "it may be possible to know something of its approach," that "there may be reasons for expecting it within one, or two centuries;" and that "for aught they know, it may come a month after the present." With these admissions, for aught that can be proved to the contrary, the adherents of Mr. Miller *may be* perfectly right

in their expositions of prophecy, with the exception of an absolute knowledge of the fact.

"That it is not for us to fore-know the time when this dispensation will end, or Christ's glorious reign on earth will begin," he argues—

1. "*From the analogy to be found in other great events under the government of God, and especially the event of death.*"

He says, "If it be found that in administering his government over this world, God has often revealed the certainty of great events, yet commonly concealed their dates, we would properly expect to find the same thing true as to the most signal deliverances of his people, or judgments against his enemies, yet to be experienced. Turn, then, to these two classes of events already recorded." p. 267.

To this we agree; and would also add, that if it be found that the dates of great events *have often been revealed*, "we would properly expect to find the same thing true as to" future events. We are therefore willing to abide in the decision of this question, by "the analogy found in other great events in the government of God." The first event to which our attention is called, is that of the flood; an event, of which our Savior said, "thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed." We are willing to rest the question on the analogy to be found in this event alone. Mr. D. admits that "God revealed to Noah his purpose to deluge the earth, and to save him only with his family, from among mankind; and with this announcement,

the patriarch received minute directions for the building of the ark." The precise time he thinks was not revealed to Noah; or if we suppose it was, that it does not appear to have been made known to others.

He says "some understand Gen. vi. 3, 'his days shall be an hundred and twenty years,' of the interval predicted to the flood;" and adds, "but how could that be possible, when Noah's three sons were living, and probably married at the time of the prediction, yet were born after he was five hundred years old, and therefore were not over one hundred years old at the flood which was in his six hundredth year?"

That such was the case when the command was given to build the ark as recorded in Gen. vi. 14, is evident; but it is not so clear, that the prediction in Gen. vi. 3, was not given that length of time before the flood. In the connection as it there stands, there is no reference in the whole paragraph to the children of Noah. With the 9th verse of Gen. 6th, evidently begins a new paragraph, which seems to have no connection with the preceeding one, and bears the impress of being a more full prediction of the same event, given at a subsequent period of time, when it had pleased God to reveal his plans and purposes to Noah more fully. In the 5th chapter is "the book of the generations of Adam" and his geneology is continued till the time is brought to the sons of Noah, independently of the history of other events. When the record of that geneology is completed, down to the time of the flood, then Moses begins the sixth chapter, with, "When men

began to multiply," &c., "and God saw that the wickedness of man was great." If therefore, men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and God saw that the wickedness of man was great in it before the birth of Noah's sons, it may also follow that the prediction in the 3d verse, being in the same connection with the record of the other facts, was also made prior to their birth. We are satisfied that it is so to be understood; and thus all difficulty is removed, and the "infidel cavil" is equally set aside, as with the other interpretation.

The other view of this passage, that "refers it to the reduced age of mankind," is encompassed with still greater obstacles; for, it cannot be shown to have been thus applicable. Individuals can be referred to, whose ages were about or were precisely 120 years, but it does not appear from the Bible—and that is the only authentic authority we have on this point—that *this* was ever the average length of the age of man. We find that for a long time after this prediction was made, the age of man was extended far beyond this limit. Shem attained the age of 600 years; Arphaxed lived 438; Salah lived 433; Eber lived 464; Peleg lived 239; Reu lived 239; Serug lived 230; Nahor lived 148; Terah lived 205; Abraham lived 175; Isaac lived 180; Jacob lived 147; Joseph lived 110; Moses was 120 when he died, and Joshua was 110. Thus it appears that for about 1000 years after this prediction was made, the great majority, of whose age we have any knowledge, attained a much greater longevity. After the flood, the age of man appears to

have gradually decreased, until it reached the limit of three score years and ten. There appears to have been no sudden cutting short of the age of man, from 900 to 120 years, as we should expect to find, if this prediction could have had such an application. Nor, as we should also expect, do we find any period when this was the usual limit of man's life. From these considerations we can see no propriety in applying this prediction to the reduced age of man; while the evidence to our mind is clear, that it denoted the time that elapsed from the prediction to the flood.

If such is the case, the "*analogy*" that is to be found in the event of the flood, is most striking. Thus, 1st. we find that at one time God only revealed the *time* when he would destroy the world, without revealing the *manner*.

2. Afterwards, the manner of that destruction is given, with a more full revelation of the event.

3. As the time draws nigh, and there are but seven days to the flood, the very day of the event is given.

4. Every individual soul, that is saved, is looking for the event at the very time, otherwise they would not have gone into the ark, and been saved.

5. Many who perished had an opportunity to know that God had purposed to drown the world; for if Noah did not reveal the time, the ark itself must have warned them; and it is in vain to suppose that they were ignorant of Noah's expectations: therefore every plank that was added to the ark was an admonition, that the time of its

completion was drawing nigh; and when it was completed, and ready for the reception of its inmates, they then might know that no longer delay was necessary for the accomplishment of God's purpose.

We should therefore expect in the second destruction of the world, that God would not reveal at any one time the whole of his purpose, respecting the time and manner of its accomplishment; but that it would be revealed a little here, and a little there—in one place the time, and in another the manner—in language so plain, that the way faring man, though a fool, need not err therein; and yet, not in language so direct, and explicit, but that those disposed might have an abundance of plausible reasons on which to predicate their doubts. Even the time itself, we should expect from the analogy, would be given in such a manner, that it might be contended with some show of reason, not to denote the duration of time, but only the defilement of the temple by Antiochus; as the prediction of the time to the flood is also applied to the reduced age of mankind. We should also expect that as the time of the event drew nigh, that all who would be saved would have a more clear conception of the great event; and when the time had about expired, would all be in the attitude of expectation of the event; even the day itself might be known *seven days* previous. On the other hand, we should also expect, that those who will perish, would, many of them, have an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the time and manner of the end, but would none of them believe in the reality of it

—would know not until the door of mercy is closed—in other words, that the wicked would do wickedly, and none of the wicked would understand, but that the wise, who are to shine as the brightness of the firmament, would all understand.

From the "*analogy*," we should expect all this. And even if the prediction in Gen. vi. 3, was not a prediction of the time to the flood, the analogy would teach us, that it would not come as a thief in the night upon any of those who escape the sad catastrophe, for as the building of the ark was a warning to the old world, so when are seen the signs predicted by our Savior, *we may know that it is near, EVEN AT THE DOORS*. The "*analogy*," therefore, in this event, is most clear and satisfactory.

The second event alluded to is the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Here it is said "The hour was not foretold; and we know not how much time elapsed between the first announcement, and the visit of the two angels, which was the evening before they hasted away Lot." p. 267.

Here again, we find that all who were saved, were apprised of the event a sufficient time previous to enable them to escape, and also to warn some of those who perished, unto whom Lot seemed as one that mocked. The "*analogy*" would therefore teach us that before Christ comes, all the truly righteous will be apprised of the fact, and know that it is so near, that they must be "up," "for the Lord will destroy this city," and yet they may not know the very "*hour*," until God takes them by the

hand to save them. We also learn by this, that some of the finally impenitent will be faithfully warned, but that they will look upon those who warn them, as misguided fanatics, and men "that mock." As it was in the day of this event, so our Savior assures us "it will be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

"Again," he says, "when the descendants of Jacob were to endure a cruel bondage in Egypt, they were not told when it would begin, nor how long it would continue, for that servitude lay between the death of Joseph and their departure under Moses, about 144 years, and was therefore only a part of the time indicated in the prediction to Abraham, and other passages; while yet the prediction gave them a right to expect deliverance; and the time of the event was revealed to them by its accomplishment." p. 267

In this case it was predicted that the seed of Abraham should 'be a stranger in a land not theirs,' 400 years; and afterward they should come out with great substance. This, with Abraham's own sojourn, made 430 years. The children of Israel therefore, could, at any time during their captivity in Egypt, have calculated the time of its termination, by adding 400 years to the time when the seed of Abraham began to be afflicted in a strange land. We also find that "at the end of the 430 years, even the self-same day, it came to pass that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." Ex. xii. 41.

Notwithstanding it is so clear, that the time was revealed before their captivity in Egypt commenced,

yet it is also evident that the predicted period had nearly elapsed before the children of Israel *were* aware of its near completion; but *before* its end, they did *understand*, and made all necessary arrangements for securing the "great substance," that it was predicted they should carry out.

There was also a fine opportunity, for any who felt disposed, to doubt respecting the time; as they might with much show of reason, have contended, that the 400 years were to be dated from the time that Jacob and all his children removed to Egypt; or it would have been plausible to have supposed that it was to be dated from the time that "another king arose that knew not Joseph," and who evil entreated them,—the same as many now contend, that the rise of Popery should not be dated from the commencement of its power, but only from the time it became quite formidable, or from the zenith of its power.

The "*analogy*" in this case would therefore lead us to expect, that the period which is to elapse before the end of the world would be a matter of prophecy—a definite prophetic period—but that it would not be fully understood until *about the time of its termination*, that there might be a question from what particular epoch it was to be dated; but that as the period drew near its termination, the time of the end would be more clearly understood, and at its termination those who are delivered would be all expecting immediate deliverance; nor would those not delivered be all ignorant that such was an

expected event. There is also in this case a most striking "*analogy*."

Again he says, "When at length they began their march through the wilderness, they could not learn how long it was to continue; and in the same ignorance they remained probably *not far from two years*, till by their murmurings, they both incurred and learned the measure of their wanderings." p. 267.

If there is any "*analogy*" between their knowledge of the end of their wanderings, and our knowledge of the Advent of Christ, then surely, those who are delivered may have a definite knowledge of "the time of the end" of *our* wanderings during the last 38 years of their continuance.

In all these events, the time of their fulfillment appears to have been "closed up and sealed," till about "the time of their end," when the time of the end was more clearly seen, and expected by those delivered. He says "their captivities were of unknown dates, so far as I have observed, with the exception of the 70 years in Babylon." pp. 267-8. There however appears to have been an expectation of deliverance just immediately before their termination, and the "*analogy*" of the 70 years, certainly indicates a like predicted period to the end of time.

He says, "The promise of a Redeemer we trace back to the very scene of the first transgression; but nearly fifty recorded generations, more than a hundred such as we reckon now, or about 3500 years, followed the transgressors before the time of his first coming could even be conjectured." p. 268.

This is all very true, and yet we find that for 538 years previous to his coming, the very year of his death was a matter of prophecy. The "*analogy*" of this event would teach us, that although ages might roll away, and man be ignorant of "the time of the end," yet before the event itself takes place, the seal would be broken, so that the wise, who are to shine as the brightness of the firmament, may understand.

As in all the events to which we have alluded, the time has been revealed, for either a longer or shorter period before its completion, so "we would expect a similar procedure as to the end of the present dispensation of the world."

The last "*analogy*" to which we are referred is the "*analogy*" "found in the event of death." He says "of all the events that can befall mankind, none is more certain than this, if the world continues as it has been; yet nothing is more uncertain as to its date."

Here again the "*analogy*" is not unfavorable to the supposition that we shall have some knowledge of the time of the end.

It is true, that death sometimes overtakes its victim, without a moment's warning; but this is not usually the case; if it were, the "*analogy*" would be against us. Death, however, usually *admonishes* us of its approach. During our whole existence, unless we are of those who will be changed at Christ's coming, death stands before us as a certain event, while we know not how far it may be from us. As we approach the verge of

life, sickness and pains, and disease, admonish us that there is a probability that death is very near us. As our disease gains the mastery over us, and hope of life vanishes, we know that the time has come when we must shortly die; and soon we are informed that we have not a day or hour to live, and then we close our eyes, and all earthly scenes fade forever from our mortal sight.

The "*analogy*" therefore to be found in the event of death would teach us, that while the end of time is far in the future, we should only be enabled to know that it is a certain event which will one day, we know not how soon, overtake the world: but as the event draws nigh, evidence would be exhibited which would convince us of the probability of its being near; then would be seen the signs by which *we might know that it was nigh even at the doors*; and then we might realize that time had nearly reached its farthest limit.

Thus "*from the analogy to be found in other great events under the government of God, and especially the event of death*" we argue that "the wise shall understand;" and that the righteous will not be "in darkness that that day should overtake them as a thief." We also argue, that all who are thus overtaken, will be in the condition of those who would not heed the warning of Noah and Lot—who despised, and wondered, and perished.

"That is not for us to fore-know the time when this dispensation will end, or Christ's glorious reign on earth will begin," he argues,

II. "From the fact that such knowledge, on the part of man, does not seem desirable." p. 269.

He admits "that this consideration, like the last, could not stand against any clear declaration of the Bible;" but gives weight to it, where "the Bible does not explicitly determine beyond all suspense or doubt."

This argument will therefore be set aside, if we can show that there is explicit evidence from the Bible that that day will not overtake the truly righteous as a thief. This we shall hope to do. For the present, we shall only endeavor to show that without such express declaration, it can be no argument.

If it is sound reasoning to argue that the event will not be fore-known, because such knowledge would be *undesirable*, it would be equally so, to argue that the event itself will never take place, because it is undesirable; and the same reasoning might be extended to any event. To a person under sentence of death, the knowledge of that fact would not seem desirable; but that would not prevent his receiving such knowledge.

Again, if we could argue that if such knowledge were undesirable, it would not be fore-known, we might also argue, on the same principle, that if it were desirable it would be fore-known. That this event will be fore-known to any who do not desire it, we do not believe; but we do believe that all who do desire to arrive at a knowledge of the truth, will be led in the way of all truth.

That it is *right* to endeavor to obtain a knowledge of the events which are a subject of prophecy, and will soon take place, we have abundance of evidence. God has at sundry times and in divers manners revealed to man a knowledge of future events: if all such knowledge was wrong, it would not have been thus revealed; and yet "the things which are revealed, are unto us and our children forever." God has assured us that he "will be inquired of." And the apostle says that the "prophets inquired and *sought diligently*, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you; searching what manner of *time* the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels *desire to look into*"—1 Pet. i. 10—12. Daniel had so earnest a desire to be instructed in the things of the future, that he hesitated not to fast "three whole weeks;" and his request was granted. He also, with his three friends, desired "mercies of the God of heaven concerning the secret" of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and "the God that revealeth secrets," gratified that *heathen* monarch with the knowledge of the thoughts of his heart as to "what should come to pass hereafter." Daniel also thanked and praised the God of heaven, that he had made known to him the king's matter.

But had Daniel taken the position that *such knowledge was undesirable*, is it probable that he would have been thus enlightened?

We are assured that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. If all scripture is profitable for any purpose, it must be understood; and any portion of scripture of which we can have no knowledge cannot be profitable to us. It is therefore desirable that we should have a knowledge of all that God has revealed in his word.

The Apocalypse is called "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the word of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand."

This Revelation, according to the opinion of the whole Protestant church, has reference to events which will not all be fulfilled till the end of time: yet "*he that readeth and they that hear* the words of this prophecy," are pronounced blessed; and surely our Savior would not bless that which is undesirable to be known. This Prophecy not only commences, but it also closes with a blessing upon

those that keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book. This blessing cannot be obtained without a knowledge of these sayings; this knowledge therefore cannot be undesirable.

He argues, p. 269, that if the event in question were "the universal spread of holiness," the knowledge of the time would not be desirable, from the fact that if such knowledge should reveal to us that the event was far in the future, it would be neither a "pleasure or profit;" and that if near, although the prospect might "be to us delightful," yet "we are only a small part of all who have lived, and we cannot pronounce that knowledge on the whole desirable, which must have deferred their hope, merely because it would hasten ours." This argument is based upon the supposition that if it is revealed in the scriptures, "it has been discoverable there, in all its remoteness, for many centuries." But does it follow that every thing *now* revealed was equally discoverable in the time of Daniel? If so, the prophets who searched diligently what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, would not have been told "that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you." And when Daniel inquired "O my Lord what shall be the end of these things?" had it been discoverable then, he would not have been told that the words were "closed up and sealed till the time of the end;" and yet that was "sealed up," which at "the time of the end," "the wise shall understand." This knowledge therefore might be revealed to us, and

"hasten our hope," without "deferring" the hope of those who lived long since.

Mr. D. also argues, that "There is reason also to fear that such prospect, however pleasing, might now enervate instead of invigorating the hearts of good men; as the near prospect of success in any enterprise, where men have a part, often relaxes their vigilance and activity, more than all difficulties and delays they have encountered." *ib.*

It is believed that this has not been found to be the case in the political world; then why should it in the religious? If any thing could give vigor and energy to any effort, it would seem that a prospect of certain victory would accomplish it. And it would seem that nothing would chill and dampen one's energy more than doubt and uncertainty.

He says, "supposing, however, the time in question to be not merely the commencement of prevailing holiness on earth, but Christ's personal coming to raise the righteous dead, and to destroy his foes," "the foreknowledge of it must then appear still less desirable. Make the supposition, that God has purposed the event shall take place in the next century, would it be best for the world to know that it will not come before? Yet if God had revealed it in his word, then, wherever that word has been read in ages past, the righteous might have been made to despond and the wicked to exult in the prospect." *ib.*

We reply to this argument, that it could not be the case if such revelation were "*closed up and sealed till the time of the end;*" and we have the testi-

mony of Daniel, that such is the case respecting the revelation in question.

"Or," he says, "make the supposition that God has purposed the event shall take place the next year. Do you rejoice in believing that probation will cease, while not more than a fragment of the whole adult human family will have been saved, rather than in believing that it will continue for an indefinite period, during which, by the greater spread and prevalence of the Gospel, the number of the saved may, on the whole scale of time, come to exceed that of the lost?" p. 270.

We reply that the event itself does not depend upon our choice respecting a knowledge of it, and the infinite wisdom of God will do that which is for the best. Besides, we can find no evidence in the word of God that religion is thus to spread and save the majority of the human race, and to hope for the contrary of what God has revealed, would argue a distrust of his wisdom and goodness. The world, when the Son of man is revealed, is described to be in the condition of the world before the flood, and like Sodom and Gomorrah before their destruction. Our Savior assures us that the tares and the wheat will grow together till the end of the world: and Daniel is told that the "little horn" will make war against the saints, and prevail against them until the Ancient of Days shall come. The saints are also said to be redeemed *out of* every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. These, with other considerations, convince us that when Christ does come, precisely the same scenes will have to

be enacted, as will occur if he comes in 1843; so that what would cause us to desire the delay of his coming one year, might cause us to desire it to be delayed forever. Neither can it be delayed for an *indefinite* period of time, for Daniel is assured that "*at the time appointed, the end shall be.*"

Any loss of happiness to those who can never have an existence because probation is cut short before their time, can not weigh in this case; whereas the misery which will be thus averted from multitudes who would be born, die, and go to perdition, were time to continue, is quite a consideration. And when we consider that the majority of those who are born, die in their sins—that the great majority of those now alive would all probably die before the world could be converted—that the number of those who are yearly born far out number those who are yearly converted, and that this melancholy proportion will continue to swell the tide of human beings rushing to destruction, so long as probation continues, benevolence and humanity would force us to pray, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Again, it is asked, "But looking at the supposed event by itself, and not as compared with universal holiness preceding it, would the foreknowledge of it, so soon to arrive, be pleasant and profitable to good men? It must be pleasant to a Christian," say some, "because he will so soon see his Savior." But this may be said of death, also, and this was the reason Paul gave for desiring death—not for desiring the end of the world—'having a desire to depart and to be with Christ,' counting it 'gain to die,'

though to him 'to live,' was 'Christ.' Yet surely every Christian is not of course eager to die. On the contrary, this world is desirable for him during his allotted time, and Christ's intercession for his followers was, 'I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.' Because the vision of Christ itself appears inviting, whether by means of death or of his personal coming, we cannot infer that either event would make his people happy at any other than the appointed time, and still less that it would be desirable for them to foreknow that time."

It is certainly our duty to wait here our appointed time, until our change come; nor have we any right to rush unbidden into the presence of our God. We cannot meet Christ either by a natural death, or by his personal coming, before our appointed time, and therefore we shall not discuss the question, whether such a meeting would conduce to happiness; but none can question but that such a meeting, at the appointed time, would be a happy one. We may therefore desire to know that such appointed time is near. Paul desired death that he might be with Christ, then why may not every Christian desire death for the same reason? We have no right to set our affections on the things of this world, nor to lay up our treasures here, for where our heart is there we shall receive our portion. We are but strangers and pilgrims here, and have no right to look upon this world as our home. Death is however a very different affair from the personal coming of Christ. To die and go into the world of spir-

its will bring us near to Christ, but the personal coming of Christ will restore all who are his to the earth, restored to its Eden state, in accordance with the covenant God made with our father Abraham, to give him and his seed the land, for an everlasting possession. This is the appearing to which Paul referred when he said, "Henceforth there is *laid up for me a crown of righteousness*, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall *give me* AT THAT DAY: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 8. Is it not natural that we should desire the approach of that day in which ALL THE RIGHTEOUS are to receive their CROWN? And can we truly love his appearing without desiring the approach of that day? That appearing cannot be our death, as some contend, for in the 1st verse, the apostle says that Christ will "judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."

"Again," he says, "we are told 'it must be pleasant to be among the living when Christ appears, and thus escape corruption.' But says Paul, 'We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed;' and you know not what violence there may be in this change, since it must in some way answer to that death which has 'passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.'"

As this change is to be "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," we know that as soon as we are aware of any "violence," all our sufferings will be forever past.

Again it is asked, "But if, so far as you are concerned, the prospect were all pleasure, would it overcome all your regard for others whom it threatens with imminent destruction?"

If others are in actual danger, that danger can be none the less, from our ignorance of it. If we knew nothing of their danger, we should not make the effort to rescue them as we should if we saw their true condition. A knowledge of the event, therefore, seems to be desirable, for their sakes.

We ought to regard the glory of Christ as of more consequence than the happiness of the entire human race, who can only be miserable because they refuse the offers of mercy of this same Savior. Our knowledge or ignorance of the event can neither hasten or delay it, and therefore such knowledge cannot add to the misery of those to be destroyed. We cannot see how such reasoning can affect the question. If we knew that probation would end in one year, many would go from house to house, and from street to street, to pull sinners out of the fire, who now supinely fold their arms, because they know not that the time is so short. Such a knowledge, might accordingly have a most blessed effect, not only on the Christian, but save the souls of sinners.

The argument respecting the little reliance to be placed in conversions which take place in the prospect of impending death, and the unfitness that such prospect produces for making the necessary preparation, we cannot quote in full, owing to its length. But it strikes us, that if men were thus unfitted, the Ninevites would never have repented at the preach-

ing of Jonah, the thief would not have repented on the cross, nor would the judgments of God be so prominently presented in his word as an inducement to repentance. But would men be any more likely to repent and prepare for an impending event, if it is taken for granted that such event is at a distance? Or would such woes be pronounced upon watchmen who neglect to give warning when they see the sword coming, and the people die in their sins, if such warning would unfit them for such preparation? With such views, Noah would not have warned the inhabitants of the old world, nor would Lot those of the cities of the plain. We are commanded to repent lest we likewise perish.

He argues, "that it is not for us to foreknow the time," &c.

III. "*From the uncertainty attending the interpretation of the Scriptures on the subject.*"

The arguments in support of this division of the subject, would seem to indicate that the meaning of the whole of Daniel and John is a matter of doubt, and that we can arrive at no certainty on the subject. As the evidence has been so often presented on these points, to present it again in this connection would be an unnecessary repetition. We will therefore barely notice but a few points.

Of the "fourth beast" in the seventh of Daniel, it is said to be "*a matter of doubt*," whether it was the Roman empire, or not. Daniel is informed that "the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it

down and break it in pieces," Dan. vii. 23. Of the "fourth kingdom," Daniel says, it "shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things, and as iron that breaketh all these," (the three previous kingdoms) "shall it break in pieces and bruise," Dan. ii. 40.

In the 2d and 7th of Daniel, the fourth kingdom is described as being divided into ten parts, and continuing in that divided state, till the consumation. The Roman kingdom is the fourth universal kingdom, according to the undisputed consent of all historians; it compares with these prophecies in all their particulars, and no other kingdom can be pointed out which can thus compare. With such clear and positive testimony, we should suppose that if this could be a matter of doubt, that no truth could be freed from such doubts. If an existing doubt is an argument against a truth, then the truth of the Christian religion, and even of the Bible itself, can only be problematical; because, there are those who have doubts respecting the authenticity of the word of God. Such doubts however are not considered as valid objections, while the evidence of the truth of the Bible is so clear and conclusive. Neither because it is doubted that the "fourth beast" is the Roman kingdom, does it follow that the conclusive evidence which establishes that point, should be set aside as of no weight.

Again it is said that if the fourth beast is the Roman empire, that "there is still more difficulty in determining what were the 'ten horns' or kingdoms, that arose from it. Nor is it clearly proved

that the 'little horn' or kingdom, which afterwards came up among them, and subdued three of them, was the papal power, rather than Antiochus Epiphanes." p. 273.

The evidence is so clear that the fourth beast is the Roman empire, that it would seem to settle the question, that Antiochus, who came out of the division of the third kingdom, could not be the one here denoted that was to arise out of the "fourth." The first ten kingdoms that arose out of the ruins of the Roman empire, appears to be also a question well settled by Marchiaval, an historian, and Dr. Hales and Bishop Lloyd, chronologers.

"Again it is left exceeding doubtful who was meant by the 'little horn' in the 8th chapter. It came from one of the four that rose up in the place of the great horn, which signified Alexander, whose empire was divided into four parts after his death; and this king or power, springing from one of those divisions, has been most generally understood to signify Antiochus."

To apply this "little horn" to Antiochus, is to make him the most conspicuous of any single character in prophecy,—even more conspicuous than were the preceding universal empires.

Josephus, a Jew, whose national feelings rendered his own nation, and the events connected with their history, as being in his eyes the fulfilment of all prophecy,—Porphyry, an *infidel*, who attempted, by showing a minute fulfilment of the book of Daniel, to prove that it was written after the events occurred; and Rollin, a *Roman-Catholic*, who was in-

terested in showing that papacy was not the *Anti-Christ*, all have attempted to prove that Antiochus was the hero of Daniel's prophecy. Such an application, however, leads us into many difficulties which cannot be freed from doubts. Those who thus interpret it, say that it must necessarily be him, because it was to arise out of one of the four horns.

There is however some *doubt* whether the "little horn" was to arise out of one of the *four horns*. It says "the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones towards the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a little horn." The question is, are the "four notable ones," or the "four winds," the antecedent of the "little horn." The "four winds" denote the four points of the compass—in the direction of the four quarters of the globe. If, therefore, the "four winds" is the antecedent of the "little horn," it must have come forth from towards one of the four quarters of the globe—from one of the four points of the compass, or in the direction of one of the four winds; and this we find true, with regard to Rome. While the three preceding universal empires arose around the neighborhood of Judea, Rome arose towards one of the four winds of heaven—"out of one of them came forth a little horn." That this could not be Antiochus, coming out of one of the four horns, is thus shown by Sir Isaac Newton. His mind appears to be freed from doubts on this question.

"A horn of a beast is never taken for a single person : it always signifies a *new* kingdom ; and the kingdom of Antiochus was an *old* one. Antiochus reigned over one of the *four* horns ; and the little horn was a *fifth*, under its proper kings. This horn was at first a little one, and waxed exceeding great ; but so did NOT Antiochus. His kingdom, on the contrary, was weak, and tributary to the Romans ; and he did NOT enlarge it. The horn was a 'king of fierce countenance, and destroyed wonderfully, and prospered and practiced :' but Antiochus was frightened out of Egypt by a mere message of the Romans, and afterwards routed and baffled by the Jews. The horn was mighty by another's power ; Antiochus acted by his own. The horn cast down the sanctuary to the ground, and so did NOT Antiochus ; he left it standing. The sanctuary and host were trampled under foot 2300 days, and in Daniel's prophecies, days are put for years : but the profanation of the temple, in the reign of Antiochus, did NOT last so many natural days. These were to last to 'the end of the indignation' against the Jews ; and this indignation is NOT YET at an end. They were to last till the sanctuary which had been *cast down* should be cleansed ; and the sanctuary is NOT YET cleansed."

Antiochus was neither a great, nor a good man. According to Rollin, instead of being a "king of a fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences," he was so given to foolish actions, that the epithet of *vile*, was most fitly bestowed upon him. And yet from the language of the prophecy, this "little horn" which "*waxed EXCEEDING GREAT*" as did NOT Antiochus, must have been as much greater than the preceding universal empires, as

Rome was greater than Grecia or Persia. The Medo-Persian power, is simply called "*GREAT*," (verse 4.) This power, the Bible tells us, "reigned from India to Ethiopia, over a hundred and seven and twenty provinces." This was succeeded by the Grecian power, which is called "*VERY GREAT*," (verse 8.) Of course, it was stronger, or more extensive, than even the Persian. Then comes the power in question, which is "**EXCEEDING GREAT.**" No one will pretend that the power of Antiochus was *exceeding great* ! above that of Alexander, the Conqueror of the world ! At one time he was an hostage in Rome ; and was never independent of that power. He was never distinguished for the greatness of his exploits, or conquests, but only for his tyranny and cruelty. When he turned his arms against Egypt, the Roman ambassador commanded him to relinquish his object ; and on his hesitating to comply immediately, the ambassador drew a circle about him in the sand, with his wand, and obliged him to agree before he left that circle, that he would OBEY. Instead of waxing exceeding great, he became so weak that the people that had paid tribute to him were not afraid to withhold it, and to rebel against him ; and he came to his end by a most loathsome disease. Surely there can be no *doubt* which power waxed EXCEEDING GREAT, that which *exacted obedience*, or that which rendered it.

Let us give the degrees of comparison, according to the angel's *rules*, and thus compare truth with error. How easy and natural is the following graduation :

Great.	Very Great.	Exceeding Great.
PERSIA,	GREECE,	ROME.

How absurd and ludicrous is the following !

Great.	Very Great.	Exceeding Great.
PERSIA,	GREECE,	ANTIOCHUS.

This little horn was to stand up against the PRINCE of princes. Antiochus died 164 years before the Prince of princes was born, while the Roman power nailed him to the cross.

This one consideration alone, should remove all doubt, and prove that Antiochus could not be the little horn that waxed exceeding great.

Of the prophetic periods in the prophecy of Daniel, it is said to have "never been proved that those days signified years," and also that it is a question, if they are years, when they commence.

That those periods were literal days, has never been proved. If the days are literal time, they are the only portion of those visions which are literal. As all the other parts of those visions are given in tropical language, it would be strange to find the time an exception. Because days are sometimes used as a type of years, it does not follow that they are always so used. But yet if it can be shown that those periods are given in tropical language, we then have a rule how such tropical language is to be understood. That they cannot be shown to have been fulfilled in the exact number of literal days is admitted by all historians. Mr. Dowling admits that "*we are not informed by any historian EXACTLY*"

the time that makes out the 2300 days ; but has no doubt, that if we *could find* such historian, we could show the exact time, which he makes 1150 days. Professor Stuart only attempts to show a fulfilment of this period, by "*counting back*" from Dec. 25th, 195, B. C. which he assumes as their "*terminus ad quem*, and we come to Aug. 5th, B. C. 171," "Hints," p. 101. Of the 1260 days, the Professor not only cannot show a fulfilment in the *exact* literal time, but even claims that *exact time is not aimed at* in these periods. He says "A statistical exactness cannot be reasonably supposed to be aimed at, in cases of this nature. Any near approximation to the measure of time in question, would of course be regarded as a sufficient reason for setting it down under the general rubric." "Hints" p. 130.

Thus the best authorities admit that these periods *cannot* be proved to have been fulfilled in literal days. There is, therefore, some *doubt* of their being literal days.

The Catholic church, to avoid our view of the papal anti-Christ, reckon these periods as days. But the great body of the most approved commentators in the Protestant church, have understood them as so many years. Professor Stuart says, that "For a long time these principles have been so current among the expositors of the English and American world, that scarcely a serious attempt to vindicate them has of late been made. They have been regarded as so plain, and so well fortified against all objections, that most expositors have deemed it quite useless even to attempt to defend them. One

might indeed almost compare the ready and unwavering assumption of these propositions, to the assumption of the first self-evident axioms in the science of geometry, which not only may dispense with any process of ratiocination in their defence, but which do not even admit of any." "Hints," p.8.

Again, he says, on p. 77. "*It is a singular fact, that THE GREAT MASS OF INTERPRETERS in the English and American world, have, for many years been wont to understand the days designated in Daniel and in the Apocalypse, as the representatives or symbols of years. I have found it difficult to trace the origin of this general, I MIGHT SAY, ALMOST UNIVERSAL CUSTOM.*"

The learned Joseph Wolfe, a converted Jew, who is one of the most finished Hebrew scholars in the world, agrees with Mr. Miller in the interpretation of prophetic time, and is teaching the end of the world in 2300 years from the commencement of the 70 weeks.

Let it therefore be distinctly remembered, that those who adopt the conclusions of Stuart, Dowling, and others, are going in direct opposition to the fixed and settled principles of interpretation, of our standard commentators.

As these visions were to be closed up and sealed till the time of the end, it follows there would be great uncertainty in fixing their commencement and termination, until such period should arrive when the seal was to be broken. The great difficulty has been, when to fix the commencement of the 2300 days. Now the seal seems to have been removed

* Such men as Faber, Prideaux, Scott, Bishop Newton, Sir Isaac Newton, all interpret the *days* of Daniel and John as so many *years*.

from the vision, by the connection which is seen between the 8th and 9th chapters of Daniel.

The vision of Dan. viii. is all explained to him, but the little horn, and *time*, that is called 2300 days, and then, he is told, "*the sanctuary shall be cleansed.*"

Now there is nothing in this chapter to indicate, before the fulfilment of a part of the vision, whether these three powers would arise and come to an end in 2300 days, or whether those days were a figure of *years*. Daniel, therefore, says he, "was astonished at the vision, but *none understood it.*" Why? his ignorance respecting the *time*, must be the *only reason*.

It appears however from the commencement of the 9th chapter, that fifteen years after this vision, he had supposed they were *literal days*, and had been then all fulfilled; for, he says, he understood by books—the 25th chapter of Jeremiah—that the seventy years that God would accomplish in the desolations of Jerusalem, were then accomplished. Jeremiah was told that at the end of the seventy years, God would punish the king of Babylon, and that nation. This was accomplished in that night when Belshazzar was slain, and Darius the Median took the kingdom, Dan. v. 30, 31. That being done, Daniel evidently thought the 2300 *days* were also *expired*, for at the end of those days the *Sanctuary* was *to be cleansed*, and we find that he immediately set his "face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer, and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes;" and he prayed for what? why, for the very thing that God said he would do at the end of the

2300 days—the cleansing of the sanctuary. He said (verse 17) “Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy SANCTUARY that is desolate, for the Lord’s sake.”

God saw that he had misapplied the days, and therefore at the beginning of his supplication, an angel was sent *swiftly*, to set him right—even the angel Gabriel, that he says he *had seen* IN THE VISION, at the beginning. He informed Daniel, and talked with him, and told him that he had *now come forth to give him skill and UNDERSTANDING*; and he says “*I am come to show thee, for thou art greatly beloved; therefore, understand the matter and consider THE VISION.*” The information that he then gave Daniel, could not but convince him that he had been laboring under a mistake *as to the time*, and that *the vision* could not be fulfilled in 2300 literal days; for said he “*seventy sevens are cut off*” (for so our best Hebrew scholars admit the original reads, and there is nothing from which to cut the seventy sevens, but the 2300 days) “upon thy people” &c. “and to anoint the Most Holy.” All admit that these *seventy sevens* reach down to A. D. 33—the year that Christ was crucified; and as they were cut off from the 2300 days, they must be *sevens* of just such periods of time as those days symbolized. If therefore those *sevens* were *sevens of years*, as they are *proved* by the result, and are *admitted to be*, then the *days* from which they were *cut off*, were symbols of years, and must end in 1843.

After the angel had informed Daniel what was to

be done in the *seventy weeks* which were *cut off*, he then glances over the remaining days which were not cut off; and informs him that Jerusalem is to be destroyed, and that “for the overspreading of abominations, he “(the little horn) shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined,” (see Jer. xxv. that Daniel had been considering) “shall be poured upon the desolate.” In the 25th of Jeremiah, the chapter which Daniel was considering when he saw that the seventy years that his nation were to serve the kings of Babylon, had been fulfilled, is also a prediction that all nations, beginning with Jerusalem, and extending to “all the kingdoms of the world, which are upon the face of the earth,” shall take the wine cup of God’s fury at his hand, and drink of it, so that they should be drunken, “and fall to rise no more, because of the sword,” which the Lord would send among them. The Lord adds, “For lo I begin to bring evil on the city which is called by my name, and should ye be utterly unpunished? Ye shall not be unpunished; for I will call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, saith the Lord of hosts. Therefore prophecy thou against them all these words; and say unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation; he shall mightily roar upon his habitation; he shall give a shout as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations, he

will stand up against them, and will destroy them with a sword. 4

will plead with all flesh; he will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried." This prediction, Daniel is informed in the explanation of the vision, by Gabriel, is all to be fulfilled after the end of the seventy sevens, which were determined upon his people and the holy city, to finish the transgression and to make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy." After that event, the Jews were first to drink of the wine cup of God's fury, for he is told "the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city, and the sanctuary," "and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured upon the desolate," when all the nations on the earth will also be obliged to drink of the same cup of God's fury; and the slain of the Lord will be "from one end of the earth even unto the other end of it." As the SANCTUARY is to be cast down till that time, it cannot be previously cleansed; and therefore Daniel would naturally infer that the 2300 days, which were to reach to the cleansing of the sanctuary, were not literal days, and did not end with the seventy years, when

the king of Babylon was punished, but must be such period of time as the seventy sevens, which all admit to be years, and that they would extend to the time when the Lord would call for a sword upon all the inhabitants of the earth, and they should fall to rise no more; and that *then the sanctuary would be cleansed.*

It is always painful to differ in opinion from those we respect and love, but this evidence is so conclusive that I could not feel justified at the bar of God and my own conscience, and remain silent in reference to this great and all-important question.

We are not disposed to follow out the argument, as the sermon under review has not gone into the question, but has only just touched upon those points as was necessary in so limited a space. Mr. Daggett has not brought out these points to prove that Christ will not come shortly, but only to show, that "minute and confident predictions" are not warranted, and that the prophecy of Daniel does not "authorize us to believe that God intended we should know the precise time of the end," p. 274. We ought certainly to be modest in all our opinions, we ought to believe nothing without good reason; nor should we reject any belief without good reason. Now we find these prophecies and periods in the book of Daniel: God, in placing them there, could only intend to convey information to the mind of man. If we come to the conclusion that the prophecies cannot be understood, then no purpose can be gained by such communications. If they cannot be understood until fulfilled, they do not foretell future

events. There is, therefore, danger that we undervalue this gift that God has given us, and which he has not given us in vain. If it could be shown that doubts could be raised as to the applications of these prophecies so that we should not be too confident in our conclusions; even if we should give these doubts all the force that the writer can attach to them, it does not follow but that these doubts are groundless, and that sound reason would dictate that we should weigh well the arguments that are advanced in proof of our Savior's immediate appearing. And blessed is that servant that shall be found watching.

Mr. Daggett argues "that it is not for us to foreknow the time when this dispensation will end."

IV. *"From the ignorance of the apostles—and even of the man Christ Jesus—on this subject."*

"As to the apostles, the text is decisive. After our Lord's resurrection, the eleven inquired of him, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?' The question regards the season of its establishment and triumph. And in his answer, he neither confirms nor contradicts their opinions as to its nature, but only meets their question, whether he is about to assume it at this time. On this point he tells them, it is not for them to receive the information they are seeking, or such knowledge does not of right belong to them: the Father hath put in his own power, or determined by his own authority, the times or seasons in which the events he has predicted will take place, and he does not see fit to make known these periods."

When this question of the Apostles is alluded to, but one half of the answer of our Savior—the 7th verse only—is usually given. The whole of his

answer—the 7th and 8th verses—will give us a more correct idea of its full import. "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."—Acts. i. 7, 8. They were to receive power of what? And of what were they to testify in all the earth? The natural inference is that it would be that of which they enquired, as it was given in answer to that question—the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. The "times and seasons" were then in the Father's own power; and as our Savior said in Mark xiii. 32. No man or angel, nor even the Son, but the Father only, knoweth, or maketh known, that day and hour. That is, at that time, the Father had the entire control of the knowledge of that event, and would continue to have until such time as He should make it known.

The question here arises, Has the Father, since that time, made known that which was then in his own power? The title of the Apocalypse is a sufficient answer. That is called "*The REVELATION of Jesus Christ which GOD GAVE UNTO HIM, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John; who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that*

hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written therein : for the time is at hand."

According to this testimony, the Father gave to Jesus Christ, and he signified it by his angel unto his servant John, and John has made a record of that, which, before the Father made it known, was entirely in the Father's power, as Christ told his disciples on the day of his ascension. If therefore this record of John testifies of the times and seasons, then we know that was what was promised to the disciples, of which they should have power, after the Holy Ghost had come upon them.

In this "Revelation" the day or hour is not revealed ; but Jesus Christ has signified by his angel the Epistles to the seven churches, the record of the seven seals, and the seven trumpets, all of which carry us down to the end of time. He has given us the number of the first beast—666, and the time of the continuance of the other beast, 42 months, with the length of time the woman should remain in the wilderness, the holy city should be trodden under foot, and the two witnesses should testify in sackcloth ; and the length of time that the fifth and sixth trumpets should sound, with the assurance that after the sixth, the seventh should sound quickly, and that when it should begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, time should be no longer, and the "kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ : and he shall reign forever and ever." It also gives us a view of the resurrection of the dead, the new heaven and earth, and the New Jerusalem. Thus

at the proper time, after the Holy Ghost had come to them, God gave to Jesus Christ, for his servants, a full and detailed account of that information which he promised should be given them.

It has been replied to this, that this revelation must have been already fulfilled, because, *the "time" was then "at hand."* Our Savior told them to "repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand ;" and it can be no more than fair, that he should be allowed to explain how he would be understood by the term, "at hand." We find that on one occasion, because the disciples thought the kingdom of God should *immediately* appear, that Christ "added and spake a parable," in which he illustrated it by a "Nobleman," who "went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return,"—thus showing, that the term "*at hand*," did not denote *immediately*.

This revelation which God gave to Jesus Christ is of no private nature, for he that hath ears to hear, is commanded to hear, and they are pronounced blessed who read, or hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein.

If we take the ground that what was unknown *before the Sacred Canon was completed*, can never be known, we must entirely throw aside all subsequent revelation, unless it is also recorded that such things should never be known ; which is not the case. And if we also believe, that we can know nothing respecting the future, from that Rev-

elation which God gave to Jesus Christ, to show unto his servants, the things which must shortly come to pass, then do we not undervalue such revelation, and slight the gift of God?

2. Pet. iii. 10. "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night," is quoted. p. 275. Peter does not say upon whom it will so come, but Paul says that it will thus come upon those who cry "Peace and safety," and not upon the "brethren;" Our Savior predicts that it will thus come upon those who say in their hearts "my Lord delayeth his coming," &c, and upon those who will not watch. This text is used by our opponents as a reason why we need not watch, and now expect his coming; but Peter gives this as a reason, why we should be diligent, that we may be found of him in peace.

The next quotation is 1 Thess. v. 1, 2. "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." It is claimed that when Paul adds, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief," that "he does not teach that it would not come *suddenly* upon Christians, but only that since they were enlightened as to the fact that it would so come, it would not injuriously surprise them, because, with such a conviction, they would live in continual preparation for it." p. 276.

If the assertion that the brethren were "not in darkness that that day should overtake them as a

thief, did not imply that it should not overtake such suddenly, then we might contend that when it is said that "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night," it does not imply that it will come suddenly upon any. If it denotes suddenness in the one case, it would seem to denote an expectation of the event previous to its time in the other case. The apostle gives as a reason why there was no need of his writing to them of the times and seasons of the coming of the Lord, because they knew perfectly "that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." He then explains upon whom it will so come. "For when they shall say *peace and safety*, then sudden destruction cometh upon *them*;" and he adds, "and *they* shall not escape." The apostle then excepts the brethren from its so coming; thus he seems to assert that it will only come "as a thief in the night," upon those who say "Peace and safety;" which cry was to be a sign to christians that they might know when that day is near; and thus not be overtaken as a thief. Although they did not know the time of the end, they yet were to have this with other signs and Revelations given them by our Lord, as evidences of its approach.

"From this undeniable ignorance of the apostles as to the time in question," he infers 1, "an obscurity in the prophecies on this point, and 2, our own ignorance;" see p. 276.

We have a right to infer that the prophecies were obscure to them on this point, at that time, but from

the prophecies, we should also infer that this was owing to the times in which they lived, and not to the prophecies. When the prophecy of Daniel was completed he was told to "shut up the words and seal the book even to the time of the end:" then follows, "Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased." That this "sealing up" of the words, denoted, that till the time of the end, the words thus sealed up were not to be fully understood, is evident from what follows. Daniel says he heard and understood not, and then asked, "O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way, Daniel; *for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.*" All therefore who lived before "the time of the end," will, as Daniel did, "understand not." The apostles, therefore, and all who lived in that age of the world, were necessarily ignorant of the full import of that which was thus sealed. But is it to be always thus sealed? It will be to the wicked, but not to the righteous. Daniel is told "the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked" shall understand, but the *pious* shall understand. The period of time when they shall understand, must necessarily be when these prophecies are unsealed, at "the time of the end." Therefore, in the time of our Savior, no one could have known the day or the hour, and it was not for them to know the times or the seasons: but this obscurity to them must have been owing to the fact that it was "closed up and sealed," and not to any obscurity in the prophecies. Therefore

we cannot infer from their ignorance, that those who live when the seal is removed, must necessarily be ignorant of that which was then "closed up and sealed."

The assertion of our Savior, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man," &c, could not denote that no man ever will know, for then it would contradict the previous verses. He had just assured them, that "the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven;" and then should follow the coming of the Son of Man. "Now," said our Savior, "learn a parable of the fig tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near even at the doors." And then, as if to inform them how near it would be after these signs were seen, he limited it within "this generation." "Verily I say unto you, This generation," (the generation that shall see these signs,) "shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

According to Luke, Christ says of these signs, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." If any confidence can be placed in the words of our Savior, then, surely, when there have been seen the very signs which he predicted should precede his coming, and in the very manner we need not be ignorant of the approach of that event, so that it should come upon us as a thief in the

night. If the pious are to be ignorant of the coming of Christ, his coming on them unawares would not be likely to be held out as an evil which they should avoid. In Luke xxi. 34, our Savior warns his followers to "take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." He then, after declaring that it shall come as a snare on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth, calls upon us, verse 36, to "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." If the righteous are to be overtaken suddenly, why are they commanded to pray that they may escape such a calamity?

Again we find that Christ's coming suddenly, is an evil which is threatened those who are not prepared for his coming, Luke xii. 45, 46. "But and if that servant say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men-servants, and maidens, and to eat and to drink, and to be drunken; the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, & will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." In Rev. iii. 3, the same is threatened those that will not watch. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come upon thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know at what hour I will come."

We are commanded to live "like unto men that wait for their Lord," and those "whom the Lord

when he cometh shall find watching," are said to be "blessed." To watch, and to wait, for an event, implies a readiness, and a continued expectation of it; and how can an event be expected, unless it is to be preceded by signs by which those who watch may know that it is near?

In the parable of the ten virgins in Matt. xxv. before the Bridegroom came, there was a cry made, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh;" and we are assured by our Savior, that when he comes, the Kingdom of heaven shall be likened to this parable. This could not be fulfilled, if the righteous with the wicked are to be overtaken as a thief. It does not therefore necessarily follow, that if we live at the time of the end, we are to infer from the ignorance of the apostles, a like ignorance on our part.

"That it is not for us to foreknow the time," &c., is argued

5. "*From the mistakes that have been made on this subject.*" p. 278.

All mistakes that have been made on this subject previous to the time of the end, are accounted for by the sealed condition of these predictions. And even if since then, mistakes have been made, it does not follow that we cannot know that this day is near, when have been seen the signs by which we might know that it is near even at the doors.

He says, p. 279. "But let it be more particularly noticed, that they who now predict the precise time of the end, are already proved to be mistaken as to the events which they say are to precede it. The papal power, in their scheme, was to be broken in

A. D. 1798, but the papacy was not broken then ; to break it, requires more than the imprisonment of the pope ; and not only is it still a *persecuting power*, but in many respects stronger since the French Revolution than before, and on the increase, we are told, in such Protestant strongholds as England and this country."

There was no prediction made previous to 1798, which required any event in that year as a fulfillment of such prediction, therefore "the papal power in their *scheme*" was *not* "to be broken" in 1798 ; but since that year has passed away, it has been found that the events of that date are so in accordance with the predictions of events that were to mark the termination of the papal power over the saints of the Most High, that it has been made one of the great landmarks in prophetic chronology, which has shown us, where, on the stream of time, our bark is floating. That the power of the Pope over the lives of the Protestants then ceased, has not been denied ; and that is all that is claimed for the loss of his power to fulfill this prophecy. If it was not still a persecuting power, it could not be the "little horn" of Dan 7th, for that was to make war with the saints, and prevail against them, *until the Ancient of days came*, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High. Its existence, as such a persecuting power, therefore, cannot denote the failure of any part of this *scheme*, but is rather a *confirmation* of it.

The prediction of the downfall of Turkey, is spoken of as another failure. Again they say the Turkish power was to be broken in the summer of A. D.

1840, and for the result they refer to the interference of the Allied Powers, at that time, in the political affairs of Turkey. But Turkish independence no more ceased then, than French independence ceased, when the same Allied Powers did more violence to France, invading her capital, and giving her one monarch in the place of another."

The entire subversion of that government was never expected at that time, but only "a voluntary surrender of Mohamedan supremacy." This it is believed has been proved to have been fulfilled. The Turkish Sultan now only reigns by the sufferance of the Christian powers of Europe, and not as an independant Mahomedan prince. Mahomedanism can no longer carry terror to the hearts of any in Christendom ; and it is no more contrary to the fulfillment of that calculation, that the Turkish sultan should remain upon his throne by the consent of Europe, than it was for Deacozes, the Greek monarch, to continue in the same manner on his throne, by permission of Amureth, for four years after he had voluntarily relinquished his supremacy. The reference to the French revolution is just in point. The government of Napoleon was opposed to the legal heir of the French throne. When therefore the Allied powers defeated him, and placed the legal heir on the throne, French supremacy was not gone, but the supremacy of Jacobinism ceased in France.

There are two reflections drawn from this subject, p. 279—281. The first is, that "If it is not for us to know the times or the seasons, we shall do well not to agitate questions of this nature. If such

knowledge does not belong to us, neither is it our business to seek such knowledge."

It will also follow, if such knowledge *does belong to us*, that it is our business to seek such knowledge. Such knowledge can only be sought successfully by prayer, and the study of God's holy word. God has revealed nothing in His Word, but what is desirable for man to know, and in protestant countries the study of God's revealed will is encouraged. We find no evil threatened in the Bible upon any who search that book, although they should search as for hid treasures; but there is a blessing pronounced upon him "that readeth, and they that hear the words of this" Apocalypse, "and keep those things which are written therein;" and the reason that is given, is, "for the time is at hand." To refuse to endeavor to know and understand what is thus revealed, would seem to be treating with indifference and disrespect, and to undervalue, that which "*the LORD God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his SERVANTS.*"

As the opinion has prevailed that the Prophecies could not be understood, they have been greatly neglected; but is there not reason to fear that if the infidel is culpable for neglecting the whole of the Bible, that we are in proportion culpable if we neglect a part?

The celebrated Hugh M'Neile of England says,

"Yet whole books of God's sacred word are left unstudied and unexpounded. Texts are selected as mottoes, and human compositions brilliantly framed are annexed to them, containing occasional quota-

tions from the Scripture, and spiritual adaptations of texts to the experience of Christians or the doctrines of the Gospel, instead of setting forth God's word in the *first place*, with occasional comments to elucidate and enforce it; but the mind of the Spirit of God in the context is not sought after, the primary application of the language, as a whole, is not elucidated. Hence, in the midst of the riches of evangelical piety, it is to be feared that there is a deplorable poverty of scriptural information. The legitimate consequence is, intermittent excitement, rather than progressive holiness. It may readily be admitted that there are many parts of Scripture, a knowledge of which is not essential to a mere escape from wrath; but who will venture to say, that any portion of truth in the word of God is not essential to progress in sanctification? For what purpose, then, is it written?—And for what purpose do we combine to circulate it far and wide? Why do we protest against scriptural extracts, if we after all practically confine ourselves to extracts? Why would we refuse, for ourselves or our people, Bibles from which Hosea, Micah, Zechariah, the Apocalypse, were suppressed, when we practically suppress from ourselves and our people, those books? I would therefore, my Reverend Brethren, with affectionate freedom, exhort you to expository preaching.

I do venture, with all singleness of heart, to counsel you to a wide course of study; for I fear exceedingly that in the midst of outward activity there is comparatively little real scriptural ballast: and in the midst of the richness of evangelical piety, there is still to be found great poverty of scriptural information. It is on this account that those who attempt to expound the Scriptures are charged with advancing new things—charged with novelties—because they attempt to expound the hitherto unexplored mines of the sacred prophetic volume. It is not because these things are new, but because

they have not been attended to, that they appear new; and therefore, by all who desire that the whole word of God should be expounded, we would earnestly deprecate the charge of novelty against those who are aiming at the redemption of these neglected portions of the word of God, and are bringing them forth to the observation and faith of the church. It is, I believe, my Reverend Brethren, on this very account that certain subjects of PROPHECY have met with so much opposition. It was thought at first sight to be a departure from the simplicity of the Gospel; and often while elucidating a chapter of Isaiah, or Jeremiah, we have been told that we were not preaching the Gospel. Surely if sanctification be by the truth, and all the word of God be truth, all of it—although in a certain sense it may be said there are many parts, the knowledge of which is not essential to personal escape from wrath—is essential to a progress in sanctification. Why has God given it all? And why, may we not ask, is the church so low in her standard and character? Is it not because the materials for sanctification have not been fully gone into? The materials have not been supplied, and consequently the fire has not burned bright. I would, therefore, with affectionate freedom, exhort my brethren to the study of the prophetic portions of Scripture."

With the closing reflection of the sermon under review, p. 281, we fully accord, viz. "*It becomes us to live in habitual readiness for the end of our probation.* Whenever the present dispensation may terminate, and however the glorious reign of Christ may be ushered in, there is a temper of heart and a way of life which may prepare the living for that day, while yet they cannot learn its date; just as there is a preparation for death, which depends not on any knowledge of its approach. And since, for every individual, probation ends with life, as truly

as with the present world's existence, he who is prepared for the end of his own life, is prepared for the end of the world. To live as seeing God, under the influence of things unseen and eternal, in repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, doing good as we have opportunity,—this is the urgent business of us all. To lead us by his Spirit thus to live, is the plan of God, both in what he discloses and in what he conceals. Thus let us be 'looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.' Then, if the day of judgment be ushered in to-morrow, will it come for us too soon? But without this preparation, though that day should be deferred a thousand years, who among you can be safe?"

If we are prepared for death, we are certainly prepared for the judgment. But if the thought of the coming of Him, who is the chiefest of ten thousand and altogether lovely, and that his coming is expected this year, does not cause the heart to beat with unwonted joy, and make us eagerly inquire and search into the truth of such expectations, have we not cause to examine anew the grounds upon which we base our hopes of salvation? The early christians were commanded to comfort each other with thoughts of the coming of Christ, and if that coming is precious to us, would it not greatly rejoice us to know that that day is near?

The only motives that can actuate any sincere believer in the Advent near, in the promulgation of the evidence of that event, is a desire that those who are out of the ark of safety, may see the short-

ness of the time of their probation, and therefore haste to make their peace with God, before it is forever too late. And believing that if sinners are convinced that they can know nothing of the approach of that day, that they will settle down in a state of carnal security, and thus peril their immortal souls, we have—in a spirit of love, and with the greatest respect for the author, who would be the last to calm their fears—endeavored to show that the evidence there presented, and the arguments there used, do not prove that the time of the end is uncertain.

The following are the closing words of that discourse, "Whatever may be the times or the seasons which the Father hath determined, prepare to meet thy God, in death, in judgment! Be ready for the bidding, for the presence of thy Savior and thy Judge!" To this we add the words of Hugh M'Neile in his address to the clergy:—

"My Reverend Brethren, watch, *preach the coming of Jesus*—I charge you, in the name of our common master, *preach the coming of Jesus*—solemnly and affectionately in the name of God, I charge you, *preach the coming of Jesus*, "Watch ye, therefore, (for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning,) lest, coming suddenly, he find the porter sleeping." Take care—"what I say unto you, I say unto you all—watch."